

Old Baltimore  
Aberdeen Proving Ground  
Aberdeen, Maryland 21001

The site of Old Baltimore was established in about 1674. Records show that ships from transatlantic ports discharged and took on cargo at Old Baltimore. The first courthouse on the western shore of Maryland was built here and law breakers were tried, punished and maybe executed. However, because the people registered complaints about the inconvenient location of the courthouse as well as its state of disrepair, a petition was signed in 1686 to have it moved to a site along the Gunpowder River. In 1712 Joppa became the county seat and the trade and population of Old Baltimore dwindled, ultimately leaving only a burial ground with ~~three~~ gravestones to mark the site.

The original location of Old Baltimore was about seven miles south of Perryman, two miles southeast of the railroad bridge over Bush River, and four miles above the Chesapeake Bay. The area at that time consisted of approximately 250 acres of fertile farmland fronted by water on the west and surrounded by trees and dense undergrowth on the north, south, and east sides. It is now located near test ranges on Aberdeen Proving Ground, trees and brush have taken over the site entirely.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Old Baltimore

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen Proving Ground

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE  
Maryland

COUNTY  
Harford

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
U. S. Department of the Army

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen Proving Ground

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code  
Maryland

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Harford County Courthouse, Lands Records Office

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

40 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE  
Maryland

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL    \_\_\_ STATE    \_\_\_ COUNTY    \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☒ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original location of Old Baltimore was about seven miles south of Perryman, two miles southeast of the railroad bridge over the Bush River and four miles above the Chesapeake Bay. The area at the time Old Baltimore was established consisted of approximately 250 acres of fertile farmland fronted by water on the west and surrounded by trees and dense undergrowth on the North, South and East sides.

The Old Baltimore area is located within the restricted confines of the Installation, is unused because of its close proximity to test ranges and as a result, trees and dense undergrowth have overtaken the area. A private burial ground remains on the side and it contains three grave stones with the following names:

William Pitt Phillips

John Paca Phillips

James Phillips, Jr.

Died July 20th 1791

Died September 27th, 1802

Died February 10th, 1812

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The site of Old Baltimore was established in about 1674. Records show that ships from Transatlantic ports discharged and took on cargo at Old Baltimore. The first courthouse on the Western shore of Maryland was built there and law breakers were tried, punished and maybe even executed. However, because the people registered complaints about the inconvenient location of the courthouse as well as its state of disrepair, a petition was signed in 1686 to have it moved to a site along the Gunpowder River. It is believed that the Gunpowder Courthouse was located at the point of Gunpowder Fork halfway between Great and Little Falls. Records reflect that citizens soon grew unhappy with that location and in 1712, it was moved to Joppa. The grandeur of Joppa endured and Old Baltimore faded away. Her trade was drawn off, her population dwindled, the buildings fell to ruin, her wharves rotted and her harbor filled up with mud. Old Baltimore has completely disappeared.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

R. J. Rappaport, Colonel, CA Director

ORGANIZATION

Facilities Engineering Directorate

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Aberdeen Proving Ground

STATE

Maryland 21005

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

As the town of Joppatowne is being laid out and constructed, it is most significant that the Diocese is planning to reestablish the church on the original site of Old Joppa in Gunpowder Parish.

While this volume is intended to cover mostly only those events of our distant past, it seems appropriate to call briefly to attention the plans for

Wright, C. Milton  
1967 Our Harford Heritage.



*Photo by Dr. David C. Hodge*

#### RUMSEY HOUSE AT OLD JOPPA

Built by Col. James Maxwell, 1724. Later, the home of Benjamin Rumsey, Member of Continental Congress.

recognition of the historic spot around Old Joppa. The man-made island surrounding the imposing brick mansion, now being converted into a museum and yacht club, has been appropriately named Rumsey Island in honor of Benjamin Rumsey. The fast growing Joppatowne, with its modern

homes and extensive system of waterways, also preserves in name the historic importance of that early county seat.

#### Baltimore On Patapsco 1768-1773

Removal of the county seat to Baltimore Town on the Patapsco in 1768 was opposed by many of the citizens of the region around the upper Chesapeake and Bush River, due to the long distance they had to travel to serve on juries and to transact other necessary business.

The new courthouse in Baltimore Town was constructed largely by private subscription of money and tobacco. In the Act of Assembly creating the new county of Harford, we find that a considerable sum was raised by the sale of the old courthouse and prison at Joppa and this was applied to the erection of the new courthouse at Baltimore Town. The Act further provided that a sum be levied for reimbursement to Harford County for building a courthouse at Harford Town.

The first courthouse in this new county seat was located on Calvert Street where the Battle Monument now stands. It was a building of two stories with a high steeple and so constructed that traffic on Calvert Street passed underneath, between its two outer supporting walls.

Baltimore, laid out in 1730 as a small village, was a growing town, having united with Jones Town in 1745 and Fell's Point in 1773. The spacious harbor made it ideal for the new port of entry and the trade in tobacco and wheat from the fields of the Pennsylvania Germans started it on its career as the great port of today.

#### Bush (Harford Town) 1773-1782

After five years, a feeling of discontent over the distance to Baltimore Town caused a petition to be filed with the Assembly at Annapolis for a division of Baltimore County and for the establishment of a new one by the name of Harford. This Act of the General Assembly of 1773 is quoted in part:

#### An Act for the Division of Baltimore County, and for Erecting a New One by the Name of Harford

WHEREAS, A considerable body of the inhabitants of Baltimore County, by their petition to this General Assembly have prayed, that an act may be passed for a division of the said county, and for erecting a new one out of part

This is a detailed topographic map of the Romney Island area. The map shows various geographical features, including 'BUSH', 'MILITARY RESERVATION', 'Old Baltimore', 'HA-1305', 'Romney Creek', 'Poverty Area', 'Bridge Creek', 'Monocacy Island', and 'Romney'. It also shows 'Towers', 'Observation towers', and 'Abandoned foundation'. The map is oriented with North at the top and includes a scale bar at the bottom indicating 1020,000 feet.

10. Manned by the Army Marine Corps